



W. BURRELL ELLIS, JR.  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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July 17, 2009

Dear Employees, Citizens and Stakeholders,

DeKalb County government, working in collaboration with the DeKalb County Board of Health, appreciates the tremendous work that you have done to help educate your workers, family, and community on ways to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus (Swine Flu). However, we still have more work to do. Before the flu season begins, we want to update you on the progression of the virus and ways to continue to keep our community safe.

Currently, the DeKalb County Board of Health reports that there are 13 confirmed cases of H1N1 in the county and 143 reported cases in Georgia. This number is expected to continue to rise.

H1N1 is circulating in the community and it will continue to be with us as we move into this year's flu season. The virus has been shown to affect school-aged children disproportionately, and children are known to be highly likely to transmit flu viruses, especially in schools and other community and faith-based group settings.

The Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have indicated that an H1N1 flu vaccine may be available in the fall. If a vaccination program is initiated, the DeKalb County Board of Health will provide specific instructions regarding who should receive the vaccine as well as specific details on when and how the vaccine will be dispensed.

County and government agencies that provide essential public services should continue to plan for non-pharmaceutical interventions to prevent disease transmission. Some of these interventions may include disinfecting commonly touched surfaces found in break rooms or rest room areas, encouraging people to wash their hands and use cough etiquette, and encouraging staff with flu-like symptoms to stay home. Each department should also familiarize their staff with their emergency response plans and update their contact information on how to reach staff after work during a large-scale crisis.

If someone that you know has flu-like symptoms and you suspect H1N1, encourage them to seek a health care provider and to take the same steps that they would if exposed to

**PAGE 2 – CEO ELLIS UPDATE ON H1N1 TO EMPLOYEES, CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

seasonal flu. If they are confirmed to have any type of influenza infection, the Board of Health recommends that they stay home for 7 days after the onset of illness.

The DeKalb County Board of Health will continue to track and monitor outbreaks in the county, investigate more severe presentations of H1N1 and work with schools, hospitals, social service agencies and my office on ways to reach special needs populations such as the elderly, home-bound and multi-ethnic groups with H1N1 education materials.

We recognize the tremendous challenges that our county and its agencies will face balancing health and safety requirements with the economic and social needs of our citizens. However, by working together, we can help to reduce the transmission of novel H1N1 and be better prepared to protect our most vulnerable populations during the flu season. For additional H1N1 planning information, visit [www.dekalbhealth.net](http://www.dekalbhealth.net) or [cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/).

Sincerely,



W. Burrell Ellis, Jr.